

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 IO-13 AID-05 IGA-02
TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08 HA-05 /125 W
-----067011 110720Z/11

R 101431Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6245
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 6388

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, MASS, ET, SO, UR, US
SUBJ: EPMG REACTION TO LACK OF US RESPONSE TO ARMS APPEALS

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 6366, B. ADDIS ABABA 6310, C. ADDIS ABABA 6297

SUMMARY: WELL-INFORMED AFRICAN AND ARAB DIPLOMATS HAVE TOLD CHARGE THAT OUR FAILURE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CHAIRMAN MENGISTU'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY WEAPONS AND SPARE PARTS IS SERIOUSLY UNDERMINING MODERATES AND THAT, AS A RESULT, ETHIOPIA HAS BEEN LEFT WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO RELY SOLELY ON SOVIETS FOR MILITARY SECURITY. EMBASSY AGREES THAT THE "GOOD GUYS" IN ETHIOPIA ARE INDEED DISAPPOINTED WITH RESULTS OF THEIR INITIATIVE; IT IS YET UNCLEAR WHETHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ALONE WILL SUFFICE TO RESTORE SOME DEGREE OF US INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA. END SUMMARY.

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1. TWO WELL-INFORMED DIPLOMATS WITH VERY GOOD CONTACTS IN THE PMAC HAVE TOLD THE NEW CHARGE THAT MODERATES IN THE GOVERNMENT NOW CLAIM BITTERLY TO THEM THAT THE US HAS REBUFFED THE AUGUST OVERTURES MADE BY PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU IN THE FORM OF HIS REQUEST FOR SPARE PARTS AND WEAPONS. A "WAIT AND SEE" POLICY IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE

ETHIOPIAN MODERATES, THEY INSIST. SOURCES ARE CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR AND DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS HAMAN DICKO AND SUDANESE CHARGE MIRGHANI. ALTHOUGH BOTH BELIEVE IT IS TOO LATE TO ATTENUATE ETHIOPIA'S OVERWHELMING DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, HAMAN DICKO RECOMMENDS THAT A TIMELY DECISION TO RENEW MILITARY RELATIONSHIP ("AT LEAST SPARE PARTS WITHOUT A MAAG"), WOULD AT LEAST KEEP MODERATES FROM SUFFERING HUMILIATION. HE PREDICTS THAT, UNLESS SPARED THIS DISGRACE, THEY WILL BE ECLIPSED OR CONVERTED TO THE MORE RADICAL, SOLIDLY PRO-SOVIET WING. WHILE URGING SUCH A RELATIONSHIP, HAMAN DICKO IS NOT SANGUINE OF ITS SUCCESS.

2. TO ILLUSTRATE RANGE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE, HAMAN DICKO SAID MENGISTU TOLD HIM PERSONALLY THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR RATANOV HAD CALLED FOR REMOVAL DEFENSE MINISTER AYALEW MANDEFRO AND MGEN GIZAW BELAYNEH BECAUSE OF THEIR WELL-KNOWN PRO-AMERICANISM. MENGISTU, HE SAID, TOLD HIM HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO PLACATE SOVIETS AND OFFER A FRIENDLY BALANCING GESTURE TO AMERICA BY NAMING AYALEW AS AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. THIS IS SECOND TIME CHARGE HAS BEEN TOLD WITHIN PAST WEEK THAT AYALEW APPOINTMENT WAS MORE THAN A CONCILIATORY GESTURE TOWARD US. (REF C, PARA 2) (AS DEPT AWARE, MGEN GIZAW HAS BEEN MADE MILITARY ADVISOR, A POSITION WITHOUT REAL POWER.)

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3. SUDANESE CHARGE MIRGHANI WAS EQUALLY PERSUADED OF ETHIOPIAN MODERATES' DISILLUSIONMENT OVER AUGUST GESTURES TOWARD THE US ("THEY TELL ME THE US WANTS US TO GET DOWN ON OUR KNEES AND BEG FOR HELP EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED MISTAKE IN ABRUPTLY CLOSING US INSTALLATIONS"). EVEN MORE THAT THE CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR, THE SUDANESE CHARGE FEELS NOW THAT TIME MUST TAKE ITS COURSE. HE SUSPECTS THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME AS DISSATISFIED WITH RUSSIAN WAYS AS THE SUDANESE HAVE AND WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO TOTAL SOVIET DOMINANCE OVER THE LONG RUN. HE CLAIMS THAT CURRENTLY IMPROVING ETHIO-SUDANESE RELATIONS WILL PERMIT SUDAN TO EXERT INFLUENCE TO THAT EFFECT, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIOPIANS APPRECIATE NEW SUDANESE ROLE IN HELPING REACH SETTLEMENT WITH ERITREANS (SUBJECT OF SEPTEL). MEIRGHANI BELIEVES MENGISTU'S TRIP TO CUBA, SOVIET UNION AND OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IS EVIDENCE OF DIRG DECISION TO RELY SOLELY ON COMMUNIST STATES FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

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-----067094 110719Z/11

R 101431Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6246
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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4. ONLY EGYPTIAN CHARGE HANAFI, AMONG DIPLOMATS CHARGE HAS CALLED UPON WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS, FEELS POSITIVE US RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR SPARE PARTS AND WEAPONS (MENTIONED TO HIM BY MENGISTU, HE CLAIMS), STILL STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF PREVENTING ETHIOPIA FROM BECOMING A SOVIET BASE -- MILITARY AS WELL AS POLITICAL -- IN AN AREA SO CRUCIAL TO MODERATE ARABS. HIS VIEWS ON POSSIBLE ARAB INITIATIVE WERE DISCUSSED REF A.

5. DURING COURSE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS, CHARGE GAVE NO HOPE WHATSOEVER THAT US COULD REVIVE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, AT LEAST IN NEAR FUTURE. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, HE COULD NOT ENCOURAGE INTERLOCUTORS TO BELIEVE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL WOULD BE POSSIBLE EVEN IF EXECUTIVE BRANCH COULD BECOME INTERESTED. THIS IS UNLIKELY IN VIEW OF ARMS RESTRAINT POLICY AND SUSPICION OF ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD WHICH CURRENT WAVE OF KILLINGS AND REPRES-

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SIONS WILL DO NOTHING TO STILL. SECRET PASSING OF ARMS THROUGH FRIENDLY INTERMEDIATES IS NEITHER LEGAL NOR

FEASIBLE (AS EGYPTIAN HAD SUGGESTED). THE US IS
SINCERELY INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOP-
MENT AND HOPES THAT ETHIOPIA WILL LIVE UP TO ITS
PROMISES OF POSITIVE NON-ALIGNMENT. IN THIS REGARD,
ALL HAD NOTED NEW STEP-UP IN ANTI-US CAMPAIGN, AS WELL
AS DEVOTION TO GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN
THE MEDIA AND INTERPRETED IT AS DEFINITE GOVERNMENT
POLICY TO SHOW DISPLEASURE OF US "REBUFF."

6. EMBASSY CONCLUDES FROM THREE CONVERSATIONS AND TWO
AT FOREIGN MINISTRY LAST WEEK (REFS B AND C), THAT EPMG
HAS PRETTY MUCH GIVEN UP TRYING TO GET NEW SPARE PARTS,
LET ALONE WEAPONS, FROM US AND MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT
DELIVERY OF "PAID-FOR" ITEMS (I.E., THOSE ITEMS ON WHICH
PARTIAL DOWN-PAYMENT HAD BEEN MADE), IS NOT IN OFFING.
REIMBURSEMENT FOR UNDELIVERED EQUIPMENT IS PROBABLY ALL
THEY ARE HOPING FOR. THEY MAY ACCEPT AID PROGRAM AS A
SIGN THAT THEY WANT US TO STAY PRESENT IN ETHIOPIA, BUT
EVEN THAT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE.

6. EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY US PRESSURE ON
SOMALIA -- EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH FRIENDLY ARABS --
TO WITHDRAW (I.I., MORE THAN ORAL SUPPORT OF OAU POSI-
TION ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY), WOULD PROBABLY HELP
STRENGTHEN MODERATES, ALTHOUGH THIS EMBASSY DOUBTS
SUCH AN UNDERTAKING IS RECONCILABLE WITH PAST ASSURANCES
WE HAVE GIVEN SOMALIA. GUESS IS THAT U.S. IS IN FOR
AN INCREASE IN NAGGING CRITICISM UNLESS WE CAN COME
UP WITH SOMETHING HIGH ON EPMG'S PRIORITY LIST. DESPITE
ALL THE RHETORIC ABOUT HELPING THE MASSES, WE QUES-
TION WHETHER LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT IS HIGH ENOUGH TO
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MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS06388
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770416-1102
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Line Count: 209
Litigation Code IDs:
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 6366, 77 ADDIS ABABA 6310, 77 ADDIS ABABA 6297
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 648790
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EPMG REACTION TO LACK OF US RESPONSE TO ARMS APPEALS
TAGS: EAID, MASS, ET, SO, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3b2d2f1e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009